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PET FOOD INDUSTRY UNDER STUDY IN MIDWEST

An active campaign is now being conducted in the Midwest to develop markets for presently under-utilized fish as food for pets and commercially-reared fur animals, Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay said today. The work is being done by the Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Saltonstall-Kennedy program of developing new markets for fishery products.

The campaign, which is centered on the shores of Lake Erie, already indicates excellent progress, the Secretary said. Animal food associations as well as some pet food canneries are investigating the possibilities of a pet food business, utilizing carp, sheepshead, smelt, and similar species. The fresh markets for these fish are limited and what could be a valuable resource is not being used. In addition, the expanded growth of these fish is having an adverse effect upon the growth of more popular food fishes, Secretary McKay added.

The Secretary pointed out that the animal food industry has been growing rapidly on the east, west, and Gulf seaboard. Last year the total output of this product was estimated to be worth \$19 million as compared with \$4 million in 1947. The number of cases of canned pet food increased from less than one million in 1947 to more than four million in 1954.

As a result of gradually declining supplies of horse meat which has been the basic fur animal food, fur ranchers are investigating the possibilities of developing under-utilized fish as a substitute.

The use of rough fish in the Midwest for animal food will not only help fill a growing demand on the fur animal ranches but will go far toward making midwestern waters more productive for the valuable fisheries resources, the Secretary said.

In recent years net fishermen in Lake Erie and other midwestern waters have reported that as much as 90 percent of their daily catches would be composed of fish having only a marginal market. This meant a lot of wasted time and effort, Secretary McKay said, but with the possibility of a new outlet opening in the pet food and fur animal field these rough fish can be made to "pay their way" in fishing operations.

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